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## Military Rape

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the result that it has been both problematized and valorized. This approach has given primacy to verbal ethnographic encounters in the field, so excluding other actors in the research process, such as academic colleagues, and other media through which theoretical ideas and concepts are negotiated. While investigations of the problematic issues of the ethnographer/informant relationship have highlighted power, control and dependency between researcher and the researched in the process of data production and interpretation, still largely overlooked is the academic 'field' whose relations contextualize the wider context of research work. We suggest that the teamwork through which our project work is taking place is just one example of the largely unacknowledged, 'conversational communities' (Gudeman and Rivera 1990) which are the basis of academic work. The referencing and citing of texts in the written accounts is just one obvious reminder of the constant comparative and reflexive approach through which academic work proceeds (Okely 1996). Our experience is another. The researcher is forever embedded within an ongoing dialogue within the collectivity of colleagues as Gudeman and Riviera (1990) have argued. Our work may be a continuation or extension of other people's work, hopefully becoming in turn the stepping stones for future researchers. Some work will be undertaken on data or in contexts produced or addressed by other, previous researchers, leading to new interpretations and insights. In this sense all ideas and conclusions are produced in conversation; the produc-

tion of knowledge takes place through these formal and informal collaborations.

In this article, we have discussed some of the insights to be gained for an anthropological study conducted through 'teamwork' and compared these to more traditional approaches which emphasize research as an individual enterprise. Further investigation of these issues would reveal other links, and establish additional connections, from informal collegial networks to more formal and intentional collaborations.

Thus the assertion 'I have been there', which, till recently, has been the anthropologist's claim to authenticity, knowledge and authority, is revealed as a myth. It is, we would argue, through the dialectical process of both 'being there' and 'not being there' that the anthropological text comes in the end to be produced and theory to be advanced. Opposing and reviewing diverse and personal reflections on the field, exploring field material together, debating it with colleagues and presenting it to wider audiences constitutes the analytic process through which we achieve our anthropological understanding (c.f. Hastруп 1995). And it is recognition of the value of this interdependency which our experience of teamwork has taught us. Rejecting the claims of ownership (of a field and of field informants) and the individuality of scholarship (the kudos of the single authored monograph), holds out considerable promise for exploring the processes involved in the production of anthropological knowledge. □

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# Military rape

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## Introductory

A deliberately empirical stance is adopted here, through my own uncertainty as to what sort of understanding is going to make most sense in limiting a phenomenon which is generally ignored by social scientists; and secondly through our (my) responses to it. Revulsion at actions found in the anthropologist's own society and sex is no reason for exculpation through claims that atrocity transcends analysis, or for adhering to an objectivizing or pathologizing position: such revulsion may be less a 'cultural' response to such a pattern than intrinsic to its maintenance.

As I proposed in last year's Presidential Address<sup>1</sup>, the coming together of both social and biological (and indeed psychological) perspectives in a certain idea of anthropology as a unitary discipline remains elusive, disconcerting and indeed naïve. Each perspective presents different understandings of human action. We can comprehend ourselves and the world naturalistically, as a consequence of cause and effect processes, statistical outcomes which are independent of, but potentially accessible to, human awareness. Yet we can also understand the same matters as the motivated actions of volitional agents employing such characteristically human attributes as intention, self-awareness, identification, representation and responsibility. Whilst we conventionally allocate one or other area of interest to the naturalistic or the personalistic, perhaps objectifying them as separate domains (nature : culture :: madness : crime), we can apply either mode of thought to any

phenomenon. The self may be a machine, the natural world may be personified. Warfare may be a strategy or the statistical outcome of biosocial contingencies. Neither mode of thought can be demonstrated as completely true, nor false; we always live with the two options, yet only one mode can be perceived as correct at any one time. Whilst anthropology concerns itself with both, social anthropologists – who comprise the majority of the Institute's Fellows – have difficulty in reconciling biological arguments which seem to diminish customary assumptions of meaning and accountability. For social anthropology, to a greater extent than we might have anticipated, has become a humanistic and moral discipline, whose personalistic assumptions of action and interpretation are now remarkably similar to those we once characterized as local or popular.

To introduce ethological and psychophysiological explanation as an understanding of human actions which we saw as primarily voluntaristic, motivated strategies manifest in competing interests, arouses, not altogether surprisingly, a sense of vertigo or indeed nausea. Particularly so when we attempt to deal with standardized sexual violence in societies including the European: not just individual rape and sexual killing (we have learnt to pathologize those as socially aberrant) but what frequently appears as an instrument of public policy.

Given revived anthropological interest in armed conflict (Has 1990, Harrison 1993, Reyna and Downs 1994, Nordstrom and Robben 1995, Richards 1996), and more generally in the human body as the locus of

I am grateful for documentary assistance from Andrew Carney (Physicians for Human Rights U.K.), Iris Fudge, Mary Petev (Office of the United Nations Commissioner For Refugees), Sushrut Jadhav, Maurice Lipsedge and Michael Wood (European Commission), for referee's comments from Tim Allen, and for conversations with Mukulika Banerjee, Jonathan Benthall, Veena Das, Murray Last, Paul Richards, Edward Schieffelin, Rosemary Wilson, Allan Young and others.

agency and experience (and not just as a symbol available to represent collective interests), and the attention to aggressive sexuality raised by the women's movement, together with fashionable cultural studies into the history of transgressive sexualities, it is perhaps surprising that there is little anthropological interest in the sexuality of war. Sexuality, that is, as lived experience, not as iconography. We may wonder if the subject is too horrific and shameful for Europeans to consider, for it is in the former Yugoslavia that the International Criminal Tribunal at The Hague has again brought mass rape by militia and armed civilians before the liberal conscience.

I do not intend to propose here any sort of unitary theory, but rather to sketch out some of the problems with what appear to be our available interpretations. It is not just that sexuality and violence may be manifest together in troubled times, but that the mass rape and sexual killing of women appear standardized in certain ways. Their frequency argues rape in wartime to be a normal part of what is to be human; yet any attempt to consider it outside of an immediate outrage or ascription of chaos and pathology<sup>2</sup> threatens to become independent of compelling human concerns. For there is a perhaps welcome relief in referring men's sexual violence to something other than their choices, as when we relegate it to the workings of a masculine ideology, a psycho-physiological contingency, or evolutionary adaptation. Our choice of terms is immediately problematic: do we talk here of pleasure or of gratification? Of agents, principals or perpetrators? Of performance, act or atrocity? And should an account of 'rape' restrict itself to the current English sense of forced intercourse, as I do here, or should it take in local connotations which might include abduction or a failure to pay bride price? Sexual violence has been argued to be the 'depersonalization' of women (Winkler 1991), 'a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear' (Brownmiller 1975), and as 'terror warfare' (Nordstrom and Robben 1995: Intro.). Given its particular associations with standardized and collective violence, can sexual aggression by men in situations of social conflict tell us any more about physical violence? Or men? Or sexuality?

Or indeed human institutions? For something like war rape appears virtually ubiquitous, and it is even carried out or simulated by child soldiers (Ilen and Gardwin-Gill 1994, World Vision 1996). I would propose that to reduce military terror rather optimistically to the local 'culture' in which it is manifest (as did Malinowski (1941)) is equivalent to attributing male aggression to societal meanings alone. And some contrary notion of a common human nature is equally banal. The exact frequency of military rape is uncertain, for its recognition reflects badly not only on the principals – perpetrators if we will – but on the victim, for an explicit justification frequently made by the soldiers who rape women is that it is to degrade and humiliate them (e.g. Amnesty 1993a, Asia Watch 1993, Human Rights Watch 1996). War rape is generally concealed, sometimes to remain as a popular rumour. (Were the American servicewomen captured in the Gulf War sexually tortured or not?) It is publicly ignored on the supposition that it is both individual deviance, yet too common to be noteworthy (Human Rights Watch 1996).

The issue of sexual violence by the military has been recalled to European awareness by estimates from the former Yugoslavia that up to 60,000 Bosnian Muslim women have been raped, many becoming pregnant and bearing the children engendered in that assault (Laber

1993)<sup>3</sup>. Some of them, instead of as in past conflicts remaining silent through their shame, have been persuaded to describe their experience to the international press<sup>4</sup>. Following therapeutic practices and self-help support groups developed in Western Europe and America to assist the *survivors* (formerly known as *victims*) of crimes and civil disasters, these women have attempted to attain something we might gloss as psychological healing. Centres such as Medica have been established for rape victims at Zenica and elsewhere, where women are encouraged to articulate a testimony beyond shame.

Military and paramilitary rape is hardly limited to Bosnia. As General Sherman protested to Union critics after his devastation of Georgia in the American Civil War, war is hell; it seldom recalls a game of chess between consenting males, the moves accepted in advance. It is estimated that tens of thousands of women were raped by the Allies in Germany at the end of the Second World War (October 1996). Rape was common among both sides in the Vietnam War. Between a quarter and half a million Tutsi women were raped in Rwanda in 1994 (Human Rights Watch 1996). Asia Watch reports that Indian soldiers in Kashmir currently rape 'to punish and humiliate the entire community' (Asia Watch 1993), calculating that local response will hold the women responsible and disorientate the community, for shamed women will be reluctant to give evidence in public courts. Indian soldiers rape not in prisons or detention camps (the Bosnian situation), but during house-to-house searches and reprisal attacks; rape is often justified to their victims as punishment on the grounds that the woman has been harbouring terrorists (*ib.*). Amnesty (1993a) suggests that army and police regularly engage in sexual violence towards the families of insurgents in Assam, and throughout India against low-caste and tribal communities. And there are documented accounts of extensive sexual violence by soldiers during the partition of India, and against Tamil women during the Indian intervention in Sri Lanka in the 1980s (Das 1996). Thousands of Somali refugees have been raped by Kenyan soldiers and police, frequently after the scarring of infibulation ('female circumcision') is cut through by knife or bayonet (Africa Watch 1993, African Rights 1994). And there are documented accounts (Amnesty 1993b, 1996, Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board 1993) of extensive military and police rape in Central America, Haiti, Burma, Indonesia, Peru, Sri Lanka and elsewhere.

There is nothing so very European here. Nor so new: Hebrew, Anglo-Saxon and Chinese chronicles recognised the rape of women as a consequence of defeat in war – as did Herodotus and Thucydides – not endorsing the horrors but certainly recognizing them as an inevitable part of military conflict. Mediaeval sieges frequently ended in sexual violence and mutilation directed against the defeated defenders, and surrenders were often negotiated with this in mind (Bradbury 1992). Whilst 'war' was recognized by Europeans as fairly circumscribed physical violence between men in socially sanctioned contexts, it was accepted that women and children were likely to be caught up – in a sense naturally – within the conflict as deliberately targeted victims (Howard *et al.* 1995). In the Roman apology, '*inter arma leges silent*'<sup>5</sup>. Not only, then, violence to disarm or eliminate men, but violence which seems to have a motive of sexual gratification or at least to use sexual idioms to establish domination.

It is difficult to distinguish these two: sexual gratification from physical sexuality as a representation of

1. 'Incest Again: Some Anthropological Implications of the Frequency of Incestuous Relationships in Post-Adoption Reunions', 25 June 1995.

2. African Rights' (1995) powerful indictment of terror against the Tutsi frequently uses an idiom of deviance and abnormality, such as 'the pathology of genocide'.



3. Whilst military rape and sexual mutilation have been reported by armed Croats, Bosnians and Serbians, it is the latter who are particularly under international scrutiny. The ratio of the number of rapes to resulting pregnancies is generally taken to be around one hundred to one (Human Rights Watch 1996).

4. Olujic (1995) notes that this has often had serious consequences for the women themselves, media exposure being followed by family and community ostracism. The newly independent Bangladesh government's attempt to promote raped women as national heroines and to offer dowries for them was a similar failure.

5. Laws are silent in war. Or, as Livy put it more cogently, 'vae victis' (woe to the defeated).

6. A common modern image of the peasant (or proletarian: cf. Zola's *Germinal*, Malinowski 1941, Grotanelli 1985). 'Head hunting' was however institutionalized among nineteenth century Balkan soldiers (Boehm 1983).

7. The same period when European societies began to abandon physical pain as a judicial punishment.

8. The notion of war as a delimited game goes back to classical Greece (Hanson 1989), but nineteenth century Europe's national wars were characterized, as if they were a military tattoo, by interested spectators carrying maps, telescopes and picnic baskets, whose only danger was off-target artillery or an unwise inclination to join in (*Vanity Fair*, *War and Peace*, *Le Débarcadere*). From Zola's novel about the Battle of Sedan in the Franco-Prussian War where armed civilians and snipers were certainly an issue (as Zola's generally accurate account notes), it appears there was only one case of reported rape during the prolonged German siege and occupation of the city; unlike the Commune that followed, which allowed extensive French on French sexual violence.

9. The use of military idioms begs a number of questions but we need some agreed denotations.

10. Which gave international currency to the term *guerrilla* (little war).

11. Compare the American Civil War where the Confederates initially shot those captured Union troops who were Black.

12. Inevitably one wonders about the ethnic origin of their rapists whom the Americans chose to execute.

13. And these are perhaps not easily distinguished. Allan Young (pers. comm.) has told me of the large number of Americans in Veterans Administration's hospitals diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder who still carry photographs from Vietnam of body parts of enemy combatants and civilians dismembered and arranged in piles; some soldiers on active service sent such pictures back to their families.

political interests. Indeed we might argue, at the risk of repeating the generally discredited 'psychological extension' theories of last century (used to explain societal incest prohibitions) that these two are inherently associated in human action: the politics of sexuality and the sexuality of politics. As conventional representation, sexual violence in war is normally depicted as directed by men on to, or rather in to, women: from *Titus Andronicus* to Goya's *Disasters of War* to Godard's *Les Carabiniers*. A myth of origin, like incest, may take the breach of an everyday prohibition as the act which inaugurated human (or civil) society: the story of the rape of the Sabine women was once familiar to every British schoolchild. And popular ethology on territorial expansion and genetic hybridization may argue something remarkably similar (e.g. Walter 1950, Young 1993). But, as it is practised, rape in war moves beyond the male co-option or fertilization of alien women into insult and genital mutilation, whose consequences cannot easily be seen as the pragmatic assimilation or impregnation of women; but rather as destructive male violence aimed at the body or society in its sexual aspect: directed against the sexual organs or in ways that have evident sexual connotations to victims, the men involved and others.

And which may be independent of the gender of the victim. The Zagreb Medical Centre For Human Rights estimates that 4,000 Croatian male prisoners were sexually tortured in Serb detention camps: 70 per cent of them remain with physical injuries, 11% were castrated or partially castrated (sometimes by women), 20% were forced to fellate their fellow prisoners (*Independent* 1996). In 1996, rebellious Iraqi officers were made to rape each other before 'execution by slow mutilation' (*Times* 1996c). Instruments of penetration are not only the erect penis but military weapons, blunt instruments, knives and so on. I am doubtful that the frequent reports from Bosnia of male prisoners (of all factions) having their testicles bitten off can be fully explained, as it often is by our journalists, as a rather folkloric equivalence between sexual organs and the virility (and thus military capability) of the opposing side – or indeed as reversion to some peasant ethic of the mutilation of livestock and enemies in times of conflict.<sup>6</sup> Nor, I think, can we easily take the opposing view and see war as simply unleashing indiscriminate violence which, once provoked, seeks to engage or consume all residues of the opposition, and easily turns back onto neutrals or indeed one's own side. What could 'indiscriminate' violence be? Can physical violence have no object, no end (in either sense)? As Marshall Sahlins reminds us in a not dissimilar context, 'Cannibalism is symbolic, even when it is real' (Sahlins 1983: 88).

### Militarism

The standard view, such as it is, argues that collective sexual violence is only the frankest expression of men's power over women: sexual only in that the genitals are the emblems of the politics of gender. And that killing of the raped woman is part of the process of cultural violence. I think it would not be unfair to identify this view with much American feminist scholarship, such as the work of Andrea Dworkin and Susan Brownmiller (1975). And I would suggest that this view would be the most acceptable for social anthropologists: in other words, rape is primarily a question of political power. The use of gendered, even sexualized, representations of national or group identity, whether as a victorious armed maiden, or an innocent child facing a lascivious and anthropoid enemy (the Rape of Belgium, of Nank-



**Kaiser—**"Woe and Death to all who oppose My Will."

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*The enemy as violator: a British war propaganda postcard, 1917. Drawing by D. Chamberlain.*

ing, indeed of Nature) allows men ('our side') to represent their collectivity as something like a family, and thus as female, nurturant and asexual, as sisters and daughters, perhaps as a mother (Warner 1985). Asexual, defenceless and innocent, they have to be protected. And the soldier represents himself as quintessentially the active man: inducted American civilians are initially referred to in military training as 'girls' (McManners 1994: 114, Adams 1993). Take the 20th century war posters and cinema which represent European aggression as the protection and rescue of 'our women' – or 'our sort of women' – from the crude sexual interests of aliens: Blacks (in Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, Huston's *The African Queen*), revolutionaries (Lang's *Metropolis*), Amerindians (Ford's *Stagecoach*) or whoever (cf. Kanitkar 1994); the liberated woman then yields herself freely to the male rescuer, her mate by nature and by choice (which here run together). And this ambivalent idealization of 'our' women goes together in a set of shared ethics and physiologies which deprecate their control of fertility, promoting men as its active agents, the guarantors of our society's physical continuity: generation and regeneration through the individual male body (compare Melanesia: Herdt 1984).

As the psychoanalysts and semioticians remind us, this leaves a hiatus: the elevation of women in this way requires some other site for the contrary representation of the women of men's everyday experience to rest upon (e.g. Reich 1975). So 'their women' are the converse. Not chaste, not maternal, not offering themselves freely for men's use, they have to be taken. And thence

14. Cf Bateson's schismogenesis or the ethologists' ritual agonistic behaviour. Why, anyway, are wars (like sex) fought between *two* sides? In practice of course they are not, and the boundaries sought cut through active neutrals, doubtful allies, unstable coalitions, issues of morale, treason and incompetence.

15. But maybe not chemical warfare which requires more expensive delivery systems and manufacture effectively limited to national institutions. If military rape is to be considered as a pragmatic strategy, it must be included within a number of other possibilities available to a particular social formation of combatants. Rules depend on affordable hardware and ideological interests, including the allocation of accountability to civilians (Guelke 1995).

16. For soldiers are trained to do things by rote: five minutes' sexual intercourse were allowed for each private soldier in the French regimental *bordels militaire de campagne*.

17. British military historians (Holmes 1984, McManners 1994) have argued that American atrocities in Vietnam were encouraged by the preliminary military-psychological training which employed images of 'female orientals' as subhuman. Compare the almost legitimated murder of prostituting women or Brazilian streetchildren, both with a public 'spoiled identity'.

18. On fictive or reconstituted households in wartime: American soldiers on leave in Vietnam hired local prostituting women with whom they lived for their period of leave in 'counterfeit domesticity' (Holmes 1984: 99). In Somalia, girls were married off early for their own security, or to establish alliances with local militia to safeguard their families; in Uganda, the Lord's Resistance Army allowed its officers four 'wives' (captured girls), some were traded for rifles in the Sudan (World Vision 1996).

19. Pers. comm.: gelada baboons.

20. As with recent accounts of child sexual abuse, we can only with difficulty distinguish atrocity stories (with their own purpose of promoting retribution) from actual events which we ignore under the pretext of lack of verification.

21. A number of people have pointed out to me that there are very different and non-Islamic precedents for the pre-execution rape of young women; nominally at least this goes with a disinclination to execute 'children'. Islam has always argued restraints in war, and the established feuding of patrilineal groups in Afghanistan and Morocco rarely involved rape in a standardised cessation of hostilities: 'do not let the blood of women or children or old men sully your victory' (Abu Bakr). Cf. also, by one of the more reliable early ethnographers of Arabia: 'Whether camps are plundered

the equation of enemy woman with booty: urging on American troops in France in 1944, General Patton promised them Paris – as French women; a perhaps not atypical elision of defeated (emasculated) ally with enemy.

This established masculinism (if I can use such a word) as an established ethic of violence and security we might not unfairly characterize as militarism, at least in the modern period. Even in peacetime, men as a group seem more likely to engage in sexual provocation than they do as individuals (take the recent U.S. sexual assaults at the Tailhook naval convention and the Aberdeen Proving Ground). Compared with conscripts, professional soldiers engage in earlier and more frequent sexual activity (Holmes 1984). Emblems of power are inscribed on the male body through heroic insignia and war paraphernalia, their converse on the enemy body – which may be already dead – by stripping off of clothes, castration and other mutilation, body counts, displays and photography of corpses as trophies and so on. Raped and then 'wasted' Vietnamese girls were left with U.S. military insignia placed between their open legs (Brownmiller 1975: 105). Compare the 'punishment' (significantly never sexual) of women who allowed the enemy voluntary access to their bodies. This is desexualizing, as in the shaven heads of the 'tontes' in Cartier-Bresson's well-known photographs of the Liberation of Paris; German women who consorted with Polish slave workers in the Nazi period were first sterilized and then sent to the death camps (Lifton 1986).

This perspective – the military as the embodiment of a masculine ethic – will perhaps not be implausible for anthropologists. Yet it is with the development since the 17th and 18th centuries<sup>7</sup> of bureaucratized standing armies, with their professional codes of honour and hierarchical discipline, that explicit rules for the conduct of European warfare first appeared, which advocated restraints that we hardly find before, notably the protection of non-combatants (Howard *et al.* 1995). We might date such restraints to Grotius' *De Iure Belli ac Pacis* of 1625, and by the 20th century, with the development of the Red Cross, the Hague (from 1899) and Geneva (1907 onwards) Conventions on the conduct and limits of war, and the Nuremberg and Tokyo Trials, sexual violence against combatants and civilians is no longer an unfortunate but inevitable component of war (and of course a potential attraction of war) but prohibited as a war crime – as clearly specified in the 1949 Geneva Convention, where rape is subsumed under 'any attack on [women's] honour'. The professionalization of national warfare – and its publicity through photography and cinema – has not involved training in sexual violence. (Not at least publicly as we shall see.) After Frederick the Great, the professional European 'battle' approached something like our contemporary notion of a 'game', with, ideally, engagement on an open but delimited terrain, logistics, strategy, clear markers between players and others,<sup>8</sup> recognized criteria for surrender, hot pursuit, and the identification and treatment of combatants, civilians and spies. In a clear-cut 'surgical' military engagement (the Falklands and Gulf Wars must approach the exemplary), the direction of violence outside the field of engagement is clearly disallowed. (Limits, of course, remain contested in practice: Argentinian corpses were mutilated by British infantry to obtain jewellery; their ears were collected by some; those who surrendered 'late' were shot (McManners 1994).)

## Making and remaking boundaries on women's bodies

It is in those contemporary situations which do not recall a bounded battle – in treason, civil war, 'pacification', low intensity conflicts and counter-insurgency<sup>9</sup> – that sexual violence seems particularly common: decentralized conflicts where a distinction between 'us' and 'them', between professional soldier and armed civilian, between civilian on the one side and on the other is less evident: encounters where, as Mao put it, the camouflaged guerrilla hides amongst the people 'like a fish in water'. And it is these situations, Goya's Peninsular War<sup>10</sup> for instance, that women more commonly became combatants and may themselves carry out sexual killing and mutilation: such as, in the Peninsular War, castration or cutting off the penis to be stuffed in the live or dead body's mouth (a pattern which has recurred in Bosnia and Rwanda where women have again been combatants). And with women recognized as fighters, or at least as supporters of an armed or rebellious male population whom they shelter and supply, they became the accepted victims of sexual violence (the Mexican and Spanish Civil Wars, the Japanese occupation of Shanghai, Turkish Armenia in 1919). I am not proposing that women bearing arms is the explanation of sexual violence directed against them, but it is commonly cited by men as a provocation<sup>11</sup>. As if their rape returned armed women to a female and hence non-combatant status; and male on male sexual violence is perhaps similar in its feminization – castration, sodomy and so on (Scarry 1985).

In these situations, the male may be less a professional soldier than a recently armed civilian or member of a political militia, but I am not arguing that uniformed professional militarism necessarily guarantees the safety of women. The Eastern Front in the Second World War would be a salient counter-example. If the Americans supposedly hanged (not, significantly, shot) some of their own soldiers who raped European civilians in the same war, the French were accused of encouraging rape by their Moroccan<sup>12</sup> troops advancing north through Italy in 1943. I would suggest however that something akin to a 'military ethos' has the potential to see non-combatant women as in need of protection not rape. As if they were just too easy hunting targets (cf. criticisms of the Gulf War 'turkey shoot'). It is in situations of actual or perceived subversion, with women as irregulars (significant term), or where warfare is carried out by armed civilians on their own ground, that the game analogy collapses, tactical advantage being replaced by simple individual aggression, with women raped as a more-or-less accepted technique. And I want to return to this common assumption that rape is an instrument of terror – that is, that there is at some level of analysis something one can call a strategic intention in using sexual violence to achieve some other goal – terror, 'pacification' or whatever (e.g. Brownmiller 1975, Guinan 1993, Human Rights Watch 1996; cf. 'opportunistic rape', World Vision 1996). An often cited instance is the Argentinian military who, in the 1970s, genitally assaulted women prisoners in front of their children and partners in an instrumental action of terrorization (as Jacobo Timerman (1985) has argued). (My continued use here of a term like 'assault' is a gross euphemism when we are talking not just of rape but of vaginal and anal penetration with sharp instruments and gun barrels, dismemberment, enucleation, cutting open pregnant women, dismemberment of the foetus, and so on; and the not uncommon posing and photography of the results as a



by day or by night [by Bedouin], the women are generally treated with respect; so far, at least that their honour is never violated, not a single instance of the contrary has ever come to my knowledge. Sometimes, however, in the case of inveterate hostility, they may be stripped of their ornaments, which the plunderers oblige them to take off themselves' (Burckhardt 1831: 304).

22. What Ernkson called 'pseudospeciation'; compare the equivalent issue in slavery (Spiegel 1996).

23. In *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*.

24. Including Robert Lifton who elsewhere (1986) has argued powerfully for the personal accountability of Nazi medical torturers.

25. Ironically, PTSD has now become the major medical justification in Europe for granting asylum to civilian refugees from war zones.

26. Brownmiller (1975) doubts Ehrenburg's authorship of this military pamphlet; but compare Rubenstein 1996. A similar rationale for inter-group rape as the victim's resolution of racism is found in Eldridge Cleaver's *Soul on Ice*.

27. Only rarely is the woman allowed to wash herself in between rapes, and whilst in Rwanda HIV infection was a serious concern for the abused women, it seldom seems to have put off the rapists (African Rights 1995: ch.10).

28. Rwanda militias (*interahamwe* – 'those who kill together') seem to have encouraged all Hutu men, including non-militia, to participate collectively in sexual violence, more to affirm their immediate loyalty than to (as the authors of the report argue) spread later responsibility (African Rights 1995). The extent to which the rapes were centrally directed by Hutu public officials is still debated (cf. *New York Review of Books*, 19 September 1996: 79–80).

29. Walter (1950) provides an early instance, Young (1993) a 'symbolic' account, Eibl-Eibesfeldt (1979), Shaw and Wong (1989) and O'Connell (1995) more in line with current ethology. The image of new growth emerging from immolation was not uncommon during the Great War, and for Romantic irrationalism, 'The whole earth, continually steeped in blood, is nothing but an immense altar on which every living thing is sacrificed without end, without restraint, without respite' (De Maistre cited in Holmes 1993).

30. An obvious objection is that whilst the rape and the killing of women are often associated, no invariant psychophysiological mechanism has been identified; but contemporary ethologists are less concerned with hard-wired biological inevitability than with contingent and statistical reproductive outcomes. Something analogous to rape and simulated rape of defeated males and females occurs among chimpanzees, the one

warning or trophy, common in Vietnam and on the Eastern Front in the Second World War, which raises the significance of post-war memorialization and commemoration, whether as pornography, souvenir or necromantic catharsis<sup>13</sup>.)

Sexual violence then seems less a standardized pattern of conflict enacted against a defining other across some accepted boundary, than a way of clarifying, developing and affirming such boundaries; less playing the accepted war game beyond the rules, than a working out of boundaries on the woman's body, symbolically but also pragmatically (as destruction of the opponent's social institutions). The more a war is a war (on the board game or toy soldier analogy), with its declaration of hostilities, return of ambassadors, exchange of civilians and neutral inspection of prisoners, the more a professionalized military ethic is held in common by both sides, the greater potential for the physical safety of non-combatants. And rather than place responsibility for atrocities simply on militarism, we might perhaps pay some attention to those journalistic accounts which talk of 'reversion' to some earlier pattern of less bureaucratized conflict (cf. Malinowski 1941). One can try to assess the contribution of military ideology without assuming it is solely responsible, at least in those wars which recall – to men – a game of chess.

Under the military regime in Greece thirty years ago, military torturers abused and humiliated those assistants who were drafted in as – shall we say – trainee torturers (Allodi 1988, Amnesty Medical Commission 1989): physically assaulting and torturing them, a pattern perhaps 'spontaneous' (again we have to be careful of the instrumental 'they did it in order to...') but which inured their young colleagues to the brutalizing of others, and which recalls the hazing of military academies and schools, which frequently demonstrates sexual aggression and humiliation (Adams 1993, McManners 1994). At times, it seems difficult to see sexual violence as goal-directed except as in expectation of immediate pleasure; for it approaches aimless violence, interconversions of perpetrator and victim, those cycles of atrocity and retribution which Girard (1977) termed 'reverberating violence', and which can end only in total defeat or in the exhaustion of victory.

On 'reverberating violence': is atrocity to be matched by atrocity, as we might speculate from the militarism model (and as indeed proposed by the military themselves: Robben 1994: 92) such that if the male understanding of woman is divided between the inviolate and the all-to-be-violated other, any insult to 'our woman-kind' has necessarily to be matched by further insults to 'theirs' in order to preserve the distinction between the two sides<sup>14</sup>?

This would support the idea that, at some level, collective sexual violence is indeed a mode of dissolving or sustaining boundaries. A tragic idiom of escalation and reciprocation is common both to ethnohistories of feuding and to academic studies of contemporary warfare, sometimes as a pragmatic process in which each side seeks an immediate advantage which is then countered by the other side, as in the military history of weaponry and tactics, or else as a humiliated attainment of meaning and justice (Kerrigan 1996). The first use of battle gas in the First World War was reciprocated; in the Second it was avoided by tacit agreement. Biological warfare currently appears avoided by the threat of 'non-conventional' reciprocation. McManners (1994) describes how in the Falklands War, British soldiers devised a pragmatic Kantian code of ethics, calculating the behaviour which would be expected from the

enemy and thus which would be reciprocated: the shooting of a British officer negotiating the surrender of an Argentinian group led to an informal decision by other ranks that no prisoners would be taken. Does physical aggression tend to follow in a series of positions and counter-positions, as in Mutually Assumed Destruction during the Cold War with the agreement not to develop certain types of anti-missile-missiles? And thus a game theory model of 'deterrence' is valid (Kagan 1996, cf. Otterbein 1994)? And how is the pattern of communication and response on such issues maintained in times of conflict? Michael Walzer (cited in Kerrigan 1996) proposes that 'the purpose of soldiers is to escape reciprocity'. Against the militarism argument, we might suggest that military institutions (or at least frequent and conventionalized warfare) actually facilitate the communication of messages along the lines of 'we are protecting your civilians here, please do likewise' standing for 'we won't rape your women if you don't rape ours': patterns of deterrence which require a certain reciprocally recognized soldierly culture on both sides (Keegan 1994)<sup>15</sup>. And which cannot be easily agreed in colonial or mercenary war ('too different ethics') or in insurgency ('non-reciprocal ethics'). Without them, can we argue for some pattern of escalation, whether biosocial, psychodynamic or strategic, in which violence mounts through a series of stages from 'good war' to a 'total war' beyond Clausewitz's visions, ending only when the final dismemberment of the dead and the living can be considered adequate (Kerrigan 1996)?

The first two sets of understandings, then, which we find immediately available (and they are hardly mutually exclusive) are:

1. The *militarism* (or reciprocal violation) argument. Collective sexual violence by men simply mirrors and exemplifies an ethic of male exceptionalism, violence as masculinity, requiring the simultaneous elevation of 'our' women in opposition to the degradation of theirs to dehumanized sexual objects, carried out and made real to men and women alike through charged national emblems of violation, rapine, arousal, assault, surrender, protection, penetration and the like. When a society incorporates images of women as valued or devalued ideals, sexual violence in war is a practicable enactment by men of this everyday set of understandings. Their personal performance of what at other times would be recognized as atrocity is 'symbolic' in that its primary motivations are political; yet the close association of exceptional public concerns with men's everyday interests makes the exercise of this power congenial for men, and facilitates its adoption as a collective enterprise (Campbell and Gibbs 1986). The militarism argument does not however easily deal with the increase in sexual violence at times of ambiguity and intra-state conflict, its association with 'other ranks' rather than officers, nor readily with male on male sexual violence nor the occasional participation of women in sexual violence. If, however, 'militarism' is simply local male interest consolidated at the level of the state, then the devaluing of enemy women and men as sexual objects may be enhanced in civil conflicts when in-group gender relations are perceived as threatened.

2. What we can call the *transgressive* (or lack of restraint) argument: the unchaining of a generally disallowed biological imperative of absolute desire and destruction following an increase in individual power over others; male propensities and their realization usually being checked by social sanctions but now unleashed through the opportunities of war, initially by those who

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might otherwise be regarded as psychopathic (and who merely represent men in a strong form), but which are then enacted by others through suggestion, solidarity and imitation<sup>16</sup>, sexual caprice and opportunity. As one code ('do not kill'), is officially transgressed against a dehumanized enemy<sup>17</sup>, other less formal transgressions may follow more easily; the sanctioned killing of armed civilians in civil war is already a greater transgression than the uniformed war game, for which, after all, every European male is prepared through childhood toys and organized sport. Like the militarism argument, lack of restraint proposes all men as inherent rapists, but here social values initially limit rather than encourage sexual violence. Once it occurs, rape becomes conventionalized as a local practice with its own rules as to appropriate practice (African Rights 1995) sometimes approaching local institutions of actual bride capture (Chagnon 1990). Despite its origins in government calls to physically eliminate a minority group, rape of the Rwanda Tutsi became locally regularized in various ways: captured girls as young as five were mutilated, then 'liberated' (the local term for rape) and killed; older ones could be rescued by other men who then proposed protection and sexual relations under the threat of abandonment in a hierarchy of emergent local power through which abused girls were handed down or sold for rape to less powerful men and allies (cf. the perks for Indian and Nepali police protection of child prostitution (Human Rights Watch 1995)); rape as public humiliation in front of crowds at cross-roads or road blocks yet accompanied by a secret promise of later marriage; rape as interrogation and the rape of corpses; ownership of women determined by conflicts over which military sector they were 'captured' in, military tribunals allocating these 'second wives'<sup>18</sup> as booty to men who were then sometimes accused by rivals of consorting with the enemy and were killed in their turn together with the women (African Rights 1995, Human Rights Watch 1996).

If the loss of restraint explanation is satisfactory in itself, however, I would suggest that collective sexual violence would be more common in peacetime. Group rape is fairly unusual (compared with wartime) in civilian Euro-America except in contexts which parallel the military: typically motor cycle and ethnic gangs (as among young American Whites during Reconstruction in the south) where it may be standardized as an initiation, the norms of the local grouping outweighing and deliberately inverting those of the wider society. In situations of insurgency and civil war, it is not however easy to hold to customary distinctions between professional and inducted soldiers, political and religious militias, local ad hoc groupings banding together for protection, and territorial or kin-based armed bands. Or indeed to local versus wider norms.

#### Why sexual violence? Biosocial and situational arguments

There are some questions which neither argument – militarism or loss of restraint – easily explain. Why sexual violence? Why this association of the erotic and the generative with the destructive? There can already be something like a 'Dionysian' sexual ecstasy in hunting humans not unlike that of competitive sport [see front cover]. If sexual violence generally presumes male genital penetration, it would seem to involve sexual arousal. Now, how does this occur if we assume – on the militarism reciprocity explanation – that individual motivations are in close correspondence with a gendered public ideology itself reliant on human morphology and

physiology? How does a man become sexually aroused as an instrumental act of terror? (And this is an issue for those other, largely feminist, accounts of individual peacetime rape which take it as less a bodily indulgence than as a preconceived means to accomplish something else – terrorization and humiliation (Brownmiller 1975).) The phenomenon seems to presume a closer concordance between human physiology and the public symbolic order than we generally allow. Despite the recent Western popularity of sadistic pornography which employs a dehumanized image to facilitate masturbation, I would suggest that in everyday life, violence and sexuality are not generally associated. Yet in situations of collective terror against women, military and police presumably are sexually stimulated and presumably achieve something like their usual pleasure in penetration, coitus and ejaculation.

Perhaps we have to consider the counter-intuitive idea that it is not that conditions of war unleash an inherent but usually proscribed pattern of action, some innate potential for sexual violence, but rather that the circumstances of war might specifically promote such a potential, or else that sexual pleasure is the primary objective, with the not uncommon lethal penetration by a weapon as a frustrated or disgusted response to a failure to be aroused when power and the encouragement of comrades should confer opportunity, anonymity and impunity. War, I would suggest, is less a continuous period of excitement than a time of new and rapidly changing social meanings and bonds, boredom and constraint, punctuated by fear (Holmes 1984, McManners 1994). And anxiety and fear are not the general conditions for men to become sexually aroused – as any sex therapist can tell us. Yet sexual assault, at least in popular perception, is not something that occurs in the heat of battle – when men have other, more pressing biological concerns – but in a reaction to the period of danger afterwards, as in the notion of the spoils of warfare which include the 'rewards' of alien women.

In psychophysiological studies, the period after sustained anxiety or exertion is frequently one of significantly decreased anxiety and loss of inhibition – and this is used in a number of psychological treatments for anxiety. Soldiers themselves view sexual relations as countering battle anxiety (McManners 1994: 115). McManners suggests that rape as an effective 'coping style' was endorsed by American army chaplains and psychiatrists in Vietnam. Does sexual violence occur after military victory (Brownmiller 1975) or defeat – or both? Robin Dunbar has described how, amongst other primates<sup>19</sup>, a male threatened by other males may engage in flight followed, when safe, by indiscriminate sexual relations with the first female he encounters. Rape of Bengali women by Pakistani soldiers followed their retreat. Can one propose that sexual violence makes a man less anxious? (Brownmiller notes that it is consistently second-line and support troops who are most likely to rape.) Is rape, like heavy consumption of alcohol (McManners 1994), particularly likely after one's own comrades' deaths? (Conversely, away from the war zone the sight of one's partner's naked body during sexual intercourse can awaken memories of stripped corpses with a decrease in sexual arousal (*ib.*)).

There are, of course, counter-examples where sexual arousal is more evidently part of an established institution. Rape by police is not uncommon in situations quite devoid of any personal threat (Amnesty 1993a). Let me take one example (a particularly unpleasant one because of its elision of individual sexual violence with cultural meanings) which deals with something we



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- Our obvious reluctance to extrapolate from physiology or primate analogues but rather to emphasize human meanings follows the near impossibility of research in humans (any findings in this area from military medicine are not publicly available) and because of the post-conflict disgust, on the part of both principal and his surviving victim, which prevents any sort of detailed contextual study. War is sanitized in military memoirs, certainly on the part of the victors. T.E. Lawrence's hints of his having been sodomized by Turkish soldiers in Syria<sup>23</sup> is unusual. It has taken us fifty years to have any sort of open knowledge of the hundreds of thousands of Korean and Chinese 'comfort women' (sexual slaves) of the Japanese military, and that without any apology that atrocity was necessarily concealed on the grounds that scientific knowledge gained from it was secretly appropriated by the eventual victors (as with the American data on Japanese medical executions of Chinese prisoners by hypothermia). Indeed, discussion of sex in war is avoided by military historians: at a more banal level, we know little about the military brothels organized by Allies and Axis in the Second World War apart from some sardonic comments on the introduction of penicillin in the memoirs of British military doctors stationed in Cairo (Holmes 1984).
- Even if 'innate' is not 'inevitable', any study of the motivations of men who carried out sexual violence, or of the particular contexts in which sexual violence becomes possible and is carried out, threatens to turn the men from perpetrators into something like victims, or at least to normalize the pattern as a 'social activity': understanding as exculpation rather than as explanation. (And thence recalling nineteenth century explanations, such as those of Spencer, which took war as constitutive of social relations; cf. Harrison 1993.) One is reminded of Allan Young's recent book (1995) where he shows how the novel category of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder emerged in the 1980s out of arguments by psychiatrists<sup>24</sup> in the Veteran Administration's hospitals in the United States. The diagnosis of PTSD allowed those soldiers guilty of sexual massacre and rape in Vietnam to become victims in their turn: victims of the 'trauma' of war in general: atrocity becomes the natural act of the traumatized.<sup>25</sup> And it may be that public recognition of sexual violence by our contemporary military is too recent to allow moral outrage to be replaced by any sort of explanation. Whilst social anthropologists might now be at ease with describing football gang violence as a 'performance', they are likely to have difficulty extending this idiom to standardised sexual violence which must remain deviant and exceptional – if not primitive.
- I would however add two more general interpretations to those of militarism and lack of restraint:
3. Sexuality and violence are inherently (that is bio-socially) associated, or, if you prefer, aspects of the same male group interests. (Hutu rapists of Tutsi women persistently demonstrated a murderous curiosity about Tutsi sexuality and reproductive capacity (Human Rights Watch 1996).) Each may lead to the other, for men's sexual relations are already in a sense aggressive, whilst violence may approach or facilitate sexual ecstasy. Prevention is thus an issue of restraints on war in general. We might term this the *psychoanalytical* or perhaps the *Stalinist* argument, Stalin having replied to muted Anglo-American protests as to the mass rape of German women in 1945 by arguing that sexual violence was inevitable in any war (October 1995). Indeed, the Soviet poet and novelist Ilya Ehrenburg urged his victorious compatriots to 'Kill. There is nothing that is innocent in the German... Break by force the racial haughtiness of German women! Take them as your lawful prey!' (Holmes 1984: 390).<sup>26</sup>
4. Both violence and sexuality are contingent and incremental, possibly in reaction to each other or related through psychophysiological (limbic) mechanisms of 'arousal'. War is an unusual biosocial situation which increases the possibility of sexual violence against women, perhaps because sexual activity reduces anxiety and confers a sense of necessary autonomy in conflictual and overwhelming situations. Like the restraint transgression argument, this might account for escalation to total terrorization, as sexual penetration by itself proves increasingly inadequate in a situation of escalating indiscriminate violence for its own sake.
- The four arguments are partial and they are complementary to each other (militarism for instance being the value of male group interests), and I would argue that perhaps they are all valid within certain limits which as yet we do not know. They are not only my attempts at interpretation but presumably similar to those used by the men concerned, both at the time and afterwards as legitimization or (rarely) apology. There must be more than a million men alive who have carried out collective sexual violence against women in war, insurgency, riots or gang activism. And on these acts (with the exception of 'The Winter Soldier Investigation' of the Vietnam Veterans Against The War) they have remained silent. How they make sense of them – forgetting, excusing, memorializing – we do not know. Nor whether their exculpations are all of a piece when talking to, say, their current sexual partner, their priest, doctor or former comrades.

### Men in a group

I do not propose to detail here the psychoanalysts' bio-social arguments as to the inevitable association of sexuality and death – or, as they generally put it, on sexuality and aggression (Reich 1975, Fromm 1977). Cer-



tainly they are the most detailed of any discipline. Their notion of 'sadism' as frustrated or displaced sexuality does provide a model whereby sexuality as the primary impulse may be transformed into violence, whereby the fetishized weapon rather than the male genital organ becomes the physical power of penetration, and whereby anxiety may be a mediating agent (Jukes 1993). That war is primarily a rape is now hardly current as an explanation of warfare in general, beyond some commentators in the women's movement, but if I am right in maintaining that rape in war is all but ubiquitous, we might wonder if the sanitization of war into a military history of decision making (such that even to describe warfare as 'collective violence' appears rhetorical) does avoid some essential concomitants, perhaps even material causes, of collective violence. Judicial castration of violent civilian sex offenders has some effect in reducing the sexual focus of their actions, if not their violence.

Psychoanalysts offer interesting but I think unlikely suggestions as to the relationship between men participating in collective sexual relations with women. Sexual violence in war is generally a collective action which suggest the association between the men may be significant. Serial rape involves each successive male penetrating and ejaculating, where another male has just done the same, a pattern of inter-male intimacy<sup>27</sup> generally unusual outside war situations and which psychoanalysis proposes as primarily a sexual relationship between the men themselves. Implausible, yet I think the complicity of every male present (recalling that of the

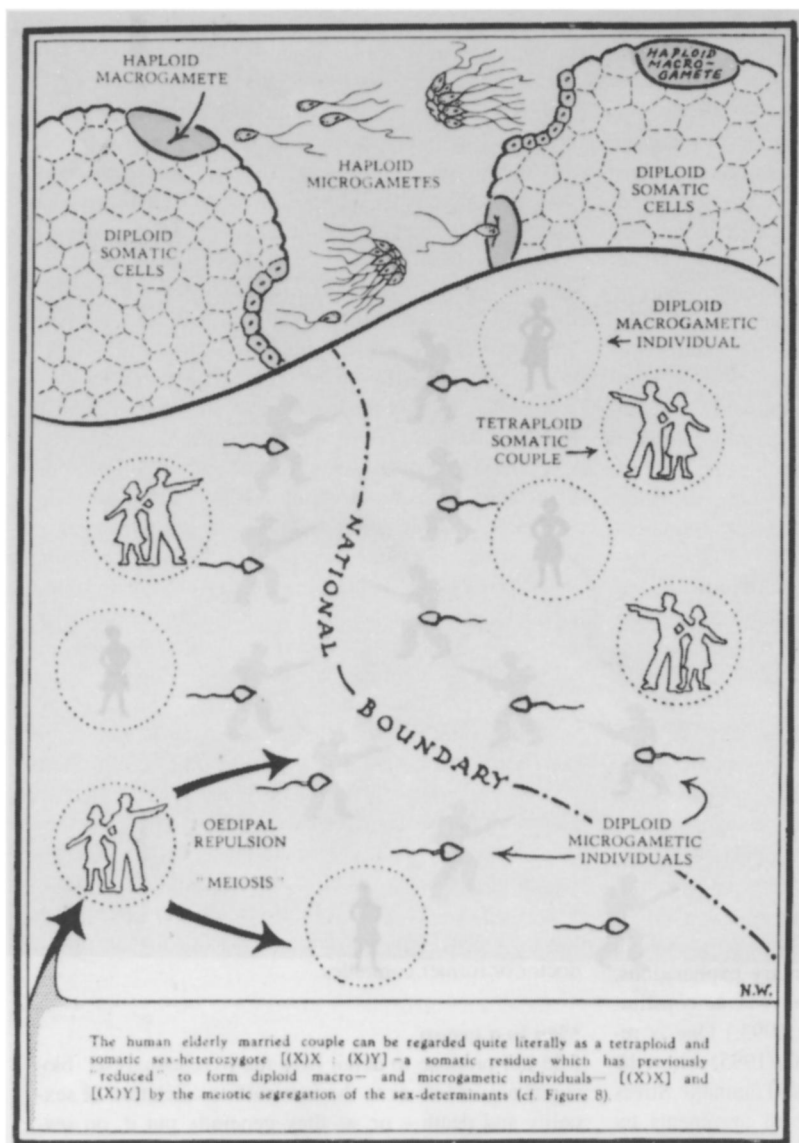
members of the execution squad) is not to be explained simply by a decision of the instigators to spread the responsibility and reduce the number of potential witnesses later,<sup>28</sup> but that it is generating or affirming some particular relationship between the men. But what? Quasi-affinity? Whether there is any psychological or ethological evidence for males in a group that has been exposed to violence to then seek sexual activity as anxiolytic more than each would individually, I am uncertain. Nor do we know much of those men who do not join in rape yet who are complicit through their witnessing. A surprisingly common account by a surviving woman in both Rwanda and Bosnia is of the low status soldier who does not join in, who apologizes and helps her dress and escape, sometimes to later demand sexual access in the name of protection in contrast to the brutality of his comrades. He appears so frequently that I am almost persuaded that he is an integral part of the whole business.

Based on a systems theory comparison of non-state polities, Otterbein (1994) argues that the frequency of warfare can be predicted better from social structure than from ecological or environmental causes: where a political subsystem mobilises localized groups of agnatic males, rape is also common and warfare is more likely to resemble a feud in its killing of male captives and valuing of prestige and booty in a practical emphasis on reciprocity rather than deterrence. And we might argue that the collapse of central authority together with the tactics demanded by contemporary weaponry in 'small wars' now promote something recalling such groupings.

#### Genes, territory and resources

Assumptions of male solidarity may for anthropologists be a more congenial implicit psychology than more evidently psychophysiological proposals, yet they are equally tenuous. Biosocial theorists have emphasized a sexual potential – if not imperative – behind war, citing its ubiquity and primate analogues, its pragmatic irrationality but ability to fascinate, the enthusiasm it arouses in both men and women and its capacity for uniting the group which organizes it, that wars are waged primarily by men against men, that fighting and subsequent reproduction are temporally associated among many mammals, that females preferentially select powerful mates, that 'dominance' in other primates (gorillas) may involve mounting and even ejaculation, the quality of female vocalizations during orgasm, and that rape of the enemy results in genetic hybridization – or if you prefer it, exogamy<sup>29</sup>. In this sense, war between men goes inherently with the rape of women, and their proximal meanings and sufferings are irrelevant. As with other biosocial models, those of war may or may not be plausible but they are unprovable<sup>30</sup>, yet aggressive sexuality is certainly associated with human reproduction, and the consequences of military rape frequently include pregnancy. 25,000 Bengali women became pregnant in rapes by Pakistani soldiers in 1971 (Brownmiller 1975). 5,000 babies were abandoned by their mothers after the Rwanda massacres (Times 1996d). Since the Nazi Holocaust, an explicit 'eugenic' motivation (the opposite of the hybridization argument) has been of academic interest in explaining massacre and genocide, whether in immediately displacing or eliminating another human group so that material resources and territory may be acquired, or else as some elaborated or implicit notion of denying reproductive advantage related to local notions of 'race' or the biological integrity of a 'nation' (Walter 1950). In Rwanda,

*Rape as exogamy: an early model of genetic hybridization from Walter 1950.*



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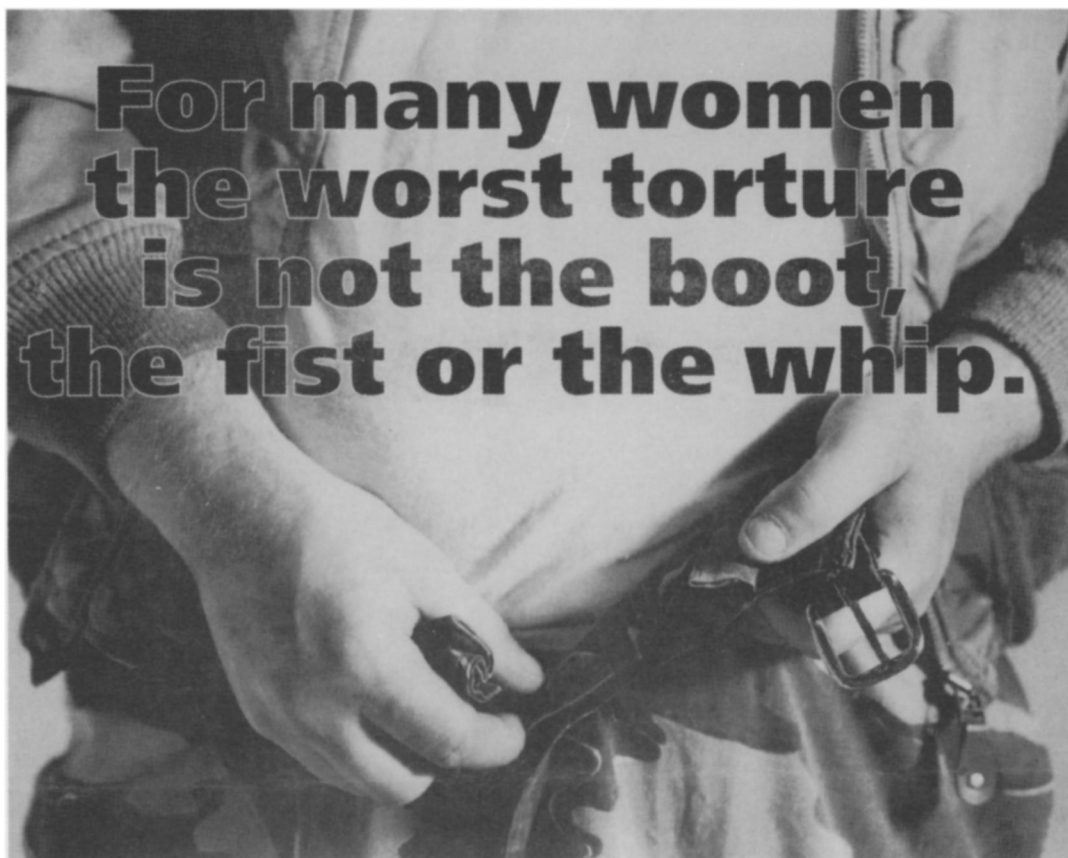
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Have you ever complained about the government? Or spoken out when you felt a thing was wrong?

In many countries this is enough to get you thrown into jail without trial, beaten or tortured. Imagine having burning cigarettes ground out on your breasts, or electric shocks in your eyes. But many women dread one torture more than these. Rape.

In India, seventeen year old Gurmit Kaur was arrested by police though it was her father and brother they had come looking for. They beat Gurmit, hung her upside down, and rubbed chili powder in her eyes. Later, several policemen, all apparently drunk, took turns to rape her.

In Turkey, Nazli Top was raped with a police truncheon despite pleading with her jailers to spare

her as she was pregnant.

In Tibet, Chinese prison warders raped young Buddhist nuns with high voltage electric batons. The nuns' crime? To sing songs about freedom.

There are worse horrors even than this.

Imagine being told by those who've raped and tormented you, that now they're going to your home to do it to your children.

When you hear about things like this, what can you do?

Despair? Let the raping and the

torture carry on unchecked?

Or will you begin to help by joining, or donating to, Amnesty?

Just by joining, you help to expose cruelty and injustice, to stop the rape, torture and murder of innocent people.

You can also join our Urgent Action scheme, which reacts instantly when we learn that someone is in imminent danger.

As you read this, all over the world, women are crying in pain and rage. Please don't turn the page. Join us here and now.

I wish to be a member of Amnesty International. I enclose: £21 Individual ☐  
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 I wish to donate £500 ☐ £250 ☐ £100 ☐ £50 ☐ £25 ☐ £10 ☐ Other ☐  
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*Amnesty International advertisement, 1996.*

the violence was sparked in part by planted rumours that family planning policies were targetted specifically on the Hutu, and that Tutsi women's sexuality was a political threat (Human Rights Watch 1996); whilst argument as to the reproductive capacities of minority groups and their future electoral significance have surfaced in Northern Ireland and in Israel. It may be significant that the Bosnian Serbs were led by a doctor, and local medical professionals have been implicated in the mass killings in Bosnia: whether this is simply because doctors are prominent among the local elite – like clergy and teachers in Rwanda (African Rights 1995: ch.12) – is uncertain.

One of the Serb rapists was a doctor who, as his victim later reported, shouted as he entered her: 'Now you know how strong we are, Croatian utasha [fascist]; you should be raped, killed, destroyed' (Laber 1993). This argues sexual violence as simply the violence of war, but other accounts by survivors record that Bosnian women were told as they were raped that they would 'make a Serb baby', and were kept in custody to be raped continually until they became pregnant, and then secluded until too late in their pregnancy to make an abortion feasible (*ib.*). Croatian male prisoners in a Serb camp were beaten on the testicles: 'As they were beating us, they were shouting "Now you will not be able to make any more Utasha babies"' (*Independent*



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1996). However, in another Bosnian instance, the rapist who impregnated a fellow villager sent her a message later to say that after the child was born he would come and kill it (*Times* 1994). These may, of course, be less two contradictory motivations than two stages: a desire for the enemy woman to bear one's child (denial of reproductive advantage to the enemy), followed after the conflict by shame and a wish to blame the woman and destroy the human evidence of what only now is recognized as a crime.

The term employed in the former Yugoslavia, 'ethnic cleansing', though not elaborated as a eugenic theory, uses familiar clinical imagery of purification, excision and integrity in favour of the *lebensraum* and unity of the social order which will emerge, whilst the Rwandan impregnation of enemy women as 'second wives' after the killing of their men returns us to the bride capture justification of social foundation. Whether we can claim here any biosocial potentiality is doubtful: there are few obvious primate analogues; nor are there historical data of any consistent military preference for the co-option rather than the physical elimination of women. But we can certainly regard sexual violence in terms of the local meanings – whether or not we take these as materially causal – for displaced populations in situations of contested boundaries, where idioms of fecundity (reproductive advantage), kinship, locality and physical appearance intersect and constitute each other in recreated local ethnohistories. In the case of the Holocaust, extermination was of course explicitly linked with the medical profession's racial genetics, which was murderously fascinated with the enigma of twins, and which attempted to co-opt 'Germanic' women among the conquered Slav nations to breed with chosen German soldiers and police.

The slippage between my own suggestions as to the relevance of biosocial models (generally of a 'fraternal interest group' or 'late palaeolithic genes in the twentieth century' sort) and those explanations offered by war criminals themselves must, I imagine, cause concern. The reasonable objection to any interpretation which is not couched in terms of cultural meanings and motivations is of course the 'Darwinian' anthropology of the last century which provided a scientific legitimization of Nazi terror, the responsibility for human action cast onto a natural process which, seen as inevitable, removed consideration of morality from actions we would now regard as political strategies. And despite

the denials by contemporary biosocial theorists, postulated genetic mechanisms for complex institutions offer less hope of human alleviation than purely 'cultural' interpretations. Despite ascribing them to local meanings (and thence they might be susceptible of change), social anthropologists assume that extensive rape and violence among Europeans are 'irrational' and inevitably destructive of human institutions (eg. Nordstrom and Robben 1995: Intro. cf. Keen 1996). And in doing so they perhaps have difficulty avoiding recourse to tropes evoking something like 'underlying primitivism'; and thence their preference for immediate political and instrumental motivations.

## Conclusion

Eric Hobsbawm (1994) has recently described the Great War's blurring of the distinction between combatant and civilian as initiating what he terms our 'age of catastrophe'. Similarly, Omer Barton (1996) has argued that this war of attrition became a paradigm for industrialized mass killing by civilians in arms, lowering the threshold of what was permissible, and thus allowing the Holocaust. It may be that the professionalization of European warfare in the early modern period which I have perhaps unfairly characterized as 'militarism', with its board game idioms of a clear field with boundaries between civilians and combatants, has been a brief and geographically limited phenomenon. If so, the current 'privatization' and deritualization of war by armed civilians as a cheap proxy for a professional army, the shift from battle to attrition, the uncoupling of bodily strength from lethal capability, the transformation of conventionalized and limited feuding into religio-political total war, together with increasing global potentials for making, remaking and unmaking communal identities, do not augur well.

Whether rules of war were accepted by professional armies in the early modern period through a transformation of ethical values, through the risks of unprecedented military technologies, or simply through fear of escalation beyond civilian ethics of human conduct, is debatable. Despite global publicity, the attempt to hold to account those we now recognise as 'war criminals', whether in Bosnia, Rwanda or East Timor, appear limited. There are no practicable sanctions. Perhaps, as the historian John Keegan (1995) observes, 'There is no substitute for honour as a medium of enforcing decency on the battlefield...' □

# conferences

## UNDER THE PALM TREE IN STOCKTON?

About 50 people attended the second workshop of the National Network for Teaching and Learning in Anthropology on the weekend of the 22-23 November 1996, sponsored by HEFCE. The workshop, which was devoted to Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods, took place at the University of Durham at Stockton. Participants from nearly all anthropology departments in the country attended. These included current stu-

dents, lecturers, teaching assistants and recent ex-students.

Michael Carrithers of the University of Durham opened the workshop with a radical statement on how teaching today meant striving for an anthropology 'at home' rather than an anthropology carried out 'under the palm tree'. Anthropological learning and teaching should aim at transforming instinctual social competence into an expert 'metacommentary'. This implies an

intellectual emphasis upon the crafted transposition of local – rather than distant – knowledge in its various forms. In teaching this means training students in the methods of fieldwork so that they can bring their craft to their professions, and appealing to 'experience' for a source of relevance and lucidity.

This frank statement echoed through the workshop, prompting a set of poignant questions. How critical might the practical